

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TAIPEI 03919 011017Z

14-11

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 SCA-01 VO-03 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

SY-05 SAM-01 INSE-00 FBIE-00 SAJ-01 IO-10 /074 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SEDSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5883

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

USLO PEKING IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TAIPEI 3919

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: POLITICAL ASYLUM REQUEST OF "KMT WAR CRIMINAL"
TUAN KO-WEN

REF: A. HONG KONG 7331

B. TAIPEI 2423

C. TAIPEI 2255

1. WE HAVE HAD VERY FEW EXCHANGES WITH GROC ON THIS ISSUE OVER THE PAST TWO AND A HALF MONTHS. PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KUO AND FOREIGN MINISTER SHEN CHANG-HUAN EARLY ON TOLD US IN UNMISTAKABLE TERMS THE ROC WOULD NOT PERMIT THE MEN TO COME TO TAIWAN (REF B AND REF C). THESE OFFICIALS WERE PERSUADED THAT (1) ALLOWING A VISIT HERE WOULD NO DOUBT BE MISINTERPRETED AS A STEP TOWARD OPENING OF CONTACTS AND (2) IF ANY CHOSE TO REMAIN HERE, IT WOULD BE CHARGED THAT THEY WERE BEING KEPT AGAINST THEIR WILL. IF THEY RETURNED TO THE MAINLAND AFTER A VISIT HERE, THE PRC WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY EXPLOIT THEM FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TAIPEI 03919 011017Z

2. THE GROC APPEARS TO BE CONVINCED THAT IN THIS "HEADS YOU WIN, TAILS I LOSE" PROPAGANDA ENGAGEMENT WITH PRC, THE SAFEST COURSE IS TO TUGH IT OUT AND HOPE IT WILL FADE AWAY. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, IN OUR EXCHANGES WE HAVE LIMITED OUR COMMENTS TO POINTING OUT THAT THE ROC WAS BEING PUT COMPLETELY ON THE DEFENSE AND WAS TAKING A PROPAGANDA BEATING. IN ANY CASE, WE FEEL THAT ON ISSUE OF THIS NATURE ANY REPRESENTATIONS WE MIGHT MAKE WOULD HAVE LITTLE OR NO IMPACT AND WOULD PROBABLY BE RESENTED.

3. SHOULD USG DECIDE RESPOND FAVORABLY TO TUAN'S REQUEST, THE ROC, IN VIEW OF ITS MOST UNCOMFORTABLE AND UNHAPPY POSITION IN CURRENT STATE OF PLAY, MIGHT, IN FACT, ACCEPT WITH SOME RELIEF USG DECISION TO PERMIT TUAN (AND ANY OF OTHER EX-POW'S) TO PROCEED TO US, THUS PUTTING AN END HOPEFULLY TO A VERY UNPLEASANT AFFAIR IN WHICH ITS POSITION IS PUBLICLY INDEFENSIBLE. NO DOUBT THE LOCAL PRESS WOULD CRITICIZE SUCH A MOVE AS "FALLING FOR A COMMUNIST TRICK," BUT WE WOULD NOT EXPECT STRONG CONDEMNATION NOR FOR VERY LONG.

4. HOWEVER, IF A DECISION IS TAKEN TO ACCEPT TUAN, EMBASSY SHOULD BE GIVEN OPPORTUNITY TO INFORM THE GROC IN ADVANCE. WE CONSIDER IT UNLIKELY, BUT IT IS JUST POSSIBLE THAT SUCH A MOVE MIGHT PRECIPITATE THE RECONSIDERATION OF THE CONSISTENTLY NEGATIVE POSITION THE ROC HAS TAKEN UP TO NOW (THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT SOME ELEMENTS OF ROC DO NOT AGREE WITH CURRENT "HARD LINE" ON THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE). ALSO, NOT TO WARN THEM IN ADVANCE WOULD SEEM NEEDLESSLY DISCOURTEOUS AND EVEN PROVOCATIVE. UNGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL ASYLUM, WAR CRIMES, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TAIPEI03919
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750227-0826
From: TAIPEI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750794/aaaadfza.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 HONG KONG 7331
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <13 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL ASYLUM REQUEST OF "KMT WAR CRIMINAL" TUAN KO-WEN
TAGS: SREF, HK, (TUAN KO-WEN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006